



# Turning off Utilities

When disaster strikes, it often affects one or more of the utilities in your home. It is important to know where the main controls are located, and when and how to turn them off.

## Electricity

- Locate your main electrical switch or fuse panel, and learn how to turn off the electrical power system.
- If a generator is used as a backup power supply, remember to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Connect lights and appliances directly to the generator and not to the electrical system.

## Water

- Turn off water at the main meter or at the water main leading into the house. This will prevent contaminated water from entering your water heater and plumbing.
- Turn off the valve — turn to the right. This will require a special valve wrench, available from a hardware store. Make sure you have the tool readily available.

## Sewer system

- Make sure your sewer system is functioning properly before using it. This will prevent the contamination of your home, and possibly, the drinking water supply.

## Gas meter (illustration below)

- Locate your gas meter and valve.
- Have a wrench immediately available for turning off the gas supply.
- If you smell natural or propane gas, evacuate immediately and leave the area. Go to where you no longer smell gas. Do not use matches, lighters, open flame appliances. Do not operate electrical switches because sparks could ignite gas causing an explosion.
- Shut off gas only if you smell gas or hear a hissing noise. Contact the gas company to turn the gas back on.



PO Box 47890  
Olympia, WA 98504-7890

Web Site:  
[www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)

360-236-4027  
(800) 525-0127

DOH Pub 821-033

